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Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 20 December 2017

[*on the report of the Second Committee (A/72/420/Add.9)*]

72/224. Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 53/7 of 16 October 1998, 54/215 of 22 December 1999, 55/205 of 20 December 2000, 56/200 of 21 December 2001, 58/210 of 23 December 2003, 60/199 of 22 December 2005, 62/197 of 19 December 2007, 64/206 of 21 December 2009, 66/206 of 22 December 2011, 69/225 of 19 December 2014, 70/201 of 22 December 2015 and 71/233 of 21 December 2016, as well as its resolutions 65/151 of 20 December 2010 on the International Year of Sustainable Energy for All and 67/215 of 21 December 2012, in which it decided to declare 2014–2024 the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All,

Reaffirming its resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", in which it adopted a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and transformative Sustainable Development Goals and targets, its commitment to working tirelessly for the full implementation of the Agenda by 2030, its recognition that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, its commitment to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions — economic, social and environmental — in a balanced and integrated manner, and to building upon the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals and seeking to address their unfinished business,

Reaffirming also its resolution 69/313 of 27 July 2015 on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, supports and complements it, helps to contextualize its means of implementation targets with concrete policies and actions, and reaffirms the strong political commitment to address the challenge of financing and creating an enabling environment at all levels for sustainable development in the spirit of global partnership and solidarity,

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Welcoming the Paris Agreement[1] and its early entry into force, encouraging all its parties to fully implement the Agreement, and parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change[2] that have not yet done so to deposit their instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, where appropriate, as soon as possible,

Recalling its resolution 55/2 of 8 September 2000, by which it adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration, the 2005 World Summit Outcome[3] and the outcome document of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals,[4]

Reaffirming the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development[5] and Agenda 21[6] and the principles set out therein, and recalling the recommendations and conclusions contained in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg Plan of Implementation)[7] and the outcome documents of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want",[8] the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, entitled "SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway",[9] the second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries, entitled "Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024",[10] and the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, entitled "Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020",[11]

Welcoming the New Urban Agenda, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), held in Quito, Ecuador, from 17 to 20 October 2016,[12]

Reaffirming that each country must take primary responsibility for its own development and that the role of national policies and development strategies cannot be overemphasized in the achievement of sustainable development, and recognizing the need for the creation of an enabling environment at all levels and across all sectors for the achievement of sustainable development,

Emphasizing that universal access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all is an integral part of poverty eradication and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and that the increased use and promotion of new and renewable energy, including in decentralized systems, and energy efficiency could make a significant contribution in that regard,

Deeply concerned that over 3 billion people in developing countries, especially in rural areas, rely on traditional biomass for cooking and heating, with

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[1] Adopted under the UNFCCC in FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1, decision 1/CP.21.

[2] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

[3] Resolution 60/1.

[4] Resolution 65/1.

[5] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex I.

[6] Ibid., annex II.

[7] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

[8] Resolution 66/288, annex.

[9] Resolution 69/15, annex.

[10] Resolution 69/137, annex II.

[11] *Report of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Istanbul, Turkey, 9–13 May 2011* (A/CONF.219/7), chap. II.

[12] Resolution 71/256, annex.

disproportionate health and workload impacts on women and children, that almost 1.1 billion people are without access to electricity, that Africa accounts for more than half of both access figures and that, even when energy services are available, millions of poor people are unable to pay for them,

Expressing concern that, at current rates of progress, none of the energy targets of the Sustainable Development Goals will be achieved by 2030,

Noting that energy represents less than 1 per cent of overall United Nations expenditure on the Sustainable Development Goals,

Emphasizing the critical socioeconomic benefits of affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy and the need to reframe the understanding of energy from a technical unit to a requirement for basic social services, economic development and poverty eradication,

Highlighting the importance of the empowerment of developing countries to achieve universal access through the rapid expansion of affordable sustainable energy worldwide,

Recognizing that each country has primary responsibility for its own economic and social development and that this includes the mobilization of financial resources, as well as capacity-building and the transfer of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed,

Welcoming the significant reductions in the cost of renewable energy, the sector's net positive job contributions and the rapid expansion of renewable energy capacity additions, which are now greater than those of other energy power sources, and noting that the levelized cost of solar and wind energy in many regions of the world is fully competitive with traditional energy sources,

Taking note with appreciation of the work of multi-stakeholder partnerships, including Sustainable Energy for All, which has given a strong momentum to the promotion of renewable energy and energy efficiency, the initiatives of the Global Climate Action Agenda, the Small Island Developing States Lighthouses Initiative, SIDS DOCK and others that can contribute to reaching the objective of ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all,

Noting with appreciation the work of the International Renewable Energy Agency, which facilitates the widespread and increased adoption and sustainable use of all forms of renewable energy,

Stressing the need for a coherent, integrated approach to energy issues and the promotion of synergies across the global energy agenda, with a focus on eradicating poverty and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals,

Reiterating the pledge that no one will be left behind, reaffirming the recognition that the dignity of the human person is fundamental, and the wish to see the Goals and targets met for all nations and peoples and for all segments of society, and recommitting to endeavour to reach the furthest behind first,

Recommitting to ensuring that no country or person is left behind and to focusing our effort where the challenges are greatest, including by ensuring the inclusion and participation of those who are furthest behind,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All,[13] calls for the rapid implementation of the strategic objectives as defined in the global plan of action for the Decade, as described

[13] A/72/156.

in a previous report of the Secretary-General on the topic,[14] and also takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all;[15]

2. *Also takes note* of the role and activities of the International Renewable Energy Agency, and encourages the Agency to continue to support its members in the achievement of their renewable energy objectives;

3. *Strongly encourages* Governments and other relevant stakeholders to take actions to achieve universal access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy, increase the global share of new and renewable energy, improve the inclusion of developing countries in energy sector cooperation, where relevant, and increase the rate of improvement in energy efficiency for a clean, low-carbon, climate-resilient, safe, efficient, modern and sustainable energy system, given the systemic sustainable development benefits, while taking into consideration the diversity of national situations, priorities, policies, specific needs and challenges and capacities of developing countries, including their energy mix and energy systems;

4. *Calls for* ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all, as such services are an integral part of poverty eradication measures, human dignity, quality of life, economic opportunity, the combating of inequality, the promotion of health and the prevention of morbidity and mortality, access to education, safe drinking water and sanitation, food security, disaster risk reduction and resilience, climate change mitigation and adaptation, environmental impact reduction, social inclusion and gender equality, including for persons affected by humanitarian emergencies;

5. *Underscores* the importance of access to cleaner and more efficient cooking and heating methods, welcomes ongoing efforts, and in this regard calls for the promotion of an enabling environment at the national and international levels for the increased usage of sustainable, cleaner and more efficient cooking and heating methods in all countries, in particular developing countries;

6. *Encourages* Governments, the United Nations system and relevant stakeholders to leverage the cost-competitiveness of renewable energy, especially in off-grid areas, in order to achieve universal energy access, such as by establishing policy frameworks for metering and payment systems, requiring cost comparisons between grid extension and off-grid solutions, facilitating investment by domestic and foreign banks and educating students, communities, investors and entrepreneurs on renewable energy and energy efficiency, among other activities, where feasible and appropriate;

7. *Calls upon* Governments to expand the use of renewable energy beyond the power sector, taking into account national priorities and constraints, to industry, heating and cooling, construction and infrastructure and, in particular, the transport sector, including through sustainable sector coupling, in the context of sustainable development, including climate change, and calls for supportive policy initiatives and investments at the national and international levels;

8. *Recognizes* that current global progress in improving energy efficiency falls well below the pace necessary to double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency by 2030, and encourages, in accordance with national laws and regulations, the adoption of building performance codes and standards, energy efficiency labelling, the promotion of energy management systems, the retrofitting of existing buildings and public procurement policies on energy, among other modalities, as

[14] See A/69/395, sect. III.
[15] A/72/160.

appropriate, as well as the prioritization of smart grid systems, district energy systems and community energy plans to improve synergies between renewable energy and energy efficiency, which aim to promote the interconnectivity of clean and renewable energy infrastructure and improve energy efficiency;

9. *Calls upon* Governments, as well as relevant international and regional organizations and other relevant stakeholders, to combine, as appropriate, the increased use of new and renewable energy resources, more efficient use of energy, greater reliance on advanced energy technologies, including cleaner fossil fuel technologies, and the sustainable use of traditional energy resources;

10. *Encourages* Governments, relevant international organizations and other relevant stakeholders to use and promote an integrated resource planning and management approach in their energy strategies that considers energy choices in the context of linked sectors, inter alia, water, waste, air quality and food, taking into account national circumstances;

11. *Recognizes* that sustainable energy access and deployment can both improve and be accelerated by gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and calls upon Governments, the United Nations development system and other stakeholders to increase educational and capacity-building programmes for women in the sector, promote women's full, equal and effective participation and leadership in the design and implementation of energy policies and programmes, mainstream a gender perspective in such policies and programmes and ensure women's full and equal access to and use of sustainable energy to enhance their economic empowerment, including employment and other income-generating opportunities;

12. *Emphasizes* the potential of sustainable energy use to contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation, recognizes that increasing the deployment of renewable energy is a component of many countries' nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,[1] and urges effective and timely support for the full implementation of those contributions, as applicable;

13. *Notes* that the impacts of climate change can also threaten access to and the supply of energy, and also notes the importance of increasing the resilience of the energy sector to climate change, in particular regarding sources of renewable energy such as hydropower, among others;

14. *Emphasizes*, while noting progress, that the large-scale deployment of technologies has been uneven and that support is required to realize their potential, along with appropriate policy initiatives and investments at the national and international levels, with Governments working in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, including the private sector;

15. *Also emphasizes* the value of regional and interregional approaches, which can, among other advantages, enhance the deployment of renewable energy by facilitating the sharing of experiences, reduce transaction costs, leverage economies of scale, enable greater cross-border interconnectivity to promote energy system reliability and resilience and augment domestic capacity-building, and recognizes the work of organizations and initiatives in that regard;

16. *Invites* all relevant funding institutions and bilateral and multilateral donors, as well as regional funding institutions, the private sector and non-governmental organizations, to continue ongoing efforts and take further action to provide financial resources, as appropriate, to support efforts aimed at ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, including low-carbon and climate-

resilient new and renewable sources of energy of demonstrated viability, especially focused on energy access and economic development in both urban and rural areas, while noting the potential catalytic effect of concessional and other finance and taking fully into account the development structure of energy-based economies of developing countries;

17. *Encourages* the development, dissemination, diffusion and transfer of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed, and highlights the importance of integrating sustainable energy in the Technology Facilitation Mechanism;

18. *Stresses* the importance of strategies and contributions by Governments and relevant stakeholders to multi-stakeholder partnerships in ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all, and encourages coordination and collaboration between the United Nations and relevant multi-stakeholder partnerships, such as Sustainable Energy for All;

19. *Recognizes* the catalytic effect of capacity-building and technical assistance on sustainable energy deployment, and encourages existing and new efforts to enable Governments from developing countries and relevant stakeholders to plan, finance, implement and monitor sustainable energy projects to further strengthen their national institutions and capacities;

20. *Encourages* the development of viable market-oriented strategies that could result in further rapid reductions in the cost of new and renewable sources of energy and could further increase the competitiveness of those technologies, including through the adoption, as appropriate, of public policies for research, development and market deployment, including rationalizing inefficient fossil fuel subsidies that encourage wasteful consumption by removing market distortions, in accordance with national circumstances;

21. *Also encourages* research and development and the development of viable market-oriented strategies that could result in further competitiveness and rapid reductions in the cost of sustainable energy;

22. *Calls for* national efforts to promote access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all and strengthened local engagement to complement current approaches, and reaffirms the commitment to supporting subnational and local efforts, taking advantage of their direct control, where applicable, of local infrastructure and codes to foster uptake in end-use sectors, such as residential, commercial and industrial buildings, industry, transport, waste and sanitation;

23. *Encourages* the Secretary-General to continue efforts to promote the provision of stable, adequate and predictable financial resources and technical assistance for sustainable energy and to enhance the effectiveness, coordination and full utilization of appropriate international funds for the effective implementation of national and regional high-priority projects for ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all;

24. *Encourages* the entities of the United Nations development system, within their respective mandates, in the context of the implementation of resolution 71/243 of 21 December 2016, to assist countries, upon request by their Governments, taking into account the need to improve coordination between them, and explicitly leveraging partnerships with other international organizations, donors and relevant stakeholders, including in their efforts to achieve universal access to sustainable energy and to accelerate its deployment;

25. *Calls upon* the relevant organizations of the United Nations system, within their respective mandates and resources, to ensure that no one is left behind and no country is left behind in the implementation of the present resolution;

26. *Calls upon* the Secretary-General to promote renewable energy, energy efficiency and related sustainable practices in all United Nations facilities and operations around the world, set implementation targets and timelines, building on and avoiding duplication with existing initiatives, and report on progress, within the most relevant existing reporting frameworks;

27. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-third session a report on the implementation of the present resolution, including activities carried out to mark the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All, and decides to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-third session, under the item entitled "Sustainable development", the sub-item entitled "Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all", unless otherwise agreed.

74th plenary meeting
20 December 2017